

Testimony
Kenneth C. Horne, Executive Director
Society of St. Andrew
April 3, 2001

Regarding the TEFAP program

Thank you very much for allowing me to be with you today. We at the Society of St. Andrew consider the work you are doing with the TEFAP program to be extremely important to the continued well being of our nation's poor and we are glad to add whatever expertise we can to the search for solutions to the obscenity of poverty in the midst of plenty.

As you know, the Society of St. Andrew salvages normally discarded produce and delivers these vegetables to agencies that serve the poor nation-wide. Last year we were able to deliver over thirty million pounds of produce to our nation's poor. We are proud of this record while at the same time recognizing that much more can be done and needs to be done.

Since our expertise is in the area of produce I will limit my remarks to that subject. The point of what I have to say is simple. There is much more produce that can be salvaged. Produce salvage is cheap. The Society of St. Andrew's cost runs about five cents per delivered pound. The TEFAP program can be utilized to dramatically increase the amount of salvaged produce made available to our nation's poor people each year. I offer three examples; there are many others.

Since produce can be donated, salvaged, and delivered to agencies that serve the poor for a total cost of only five cents per pound the first course that suggests itself is to simply increase TEFAP funding for that purpose. A modest increase of fifty thousand dollars per state, two and one half million dollars annually, would issue in deliveries of fifty million pounds of produce nation-wide. Both Society of St. Andrew and America's Second Harvest have the capacity to meet increased demand at that level. I refer you to the experience of the state of North Carolina (which already uses some of its TEFAP funding this way) for an example of the effectiveness of this approach.

Every year growers offering what you might term "emergency" donations approach the Society of St. Andrew. Generally as a result of a market glut a large amount of produce (commonly in excess of ten million pounds) must be either donated or discarded in a short amount of time (generally six weeks or less).

There are only two organizations equipped to handle a donation of this magnitude, Society of St. Andrew and America's Second Harvest. But neither organization has the "emergency" funds necessary to package and transport this volume of produce in such a short time. If TEFAP could create a revolving fund of one to two million dollars that could be drawn on in response to these "emergency" donations, much of this food could be salvaged and delivered to our nation's food bank system instead of being lost as is presently the case.

Finally, TEFAP monies could be usefully spent as seed money, consistent with TEFAP goals, for the replication and growth of successful produce salvage programs both at the state and local level. The present spirit of cooperation between the private sector and government, and the increased openness toward partnerships between

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government and the faith based community give us an unprecedented opportunity to help the private sector increase its ability to serve the poor.

In our area of expertise, produce salvage, we have embarked on a plan to establish the first truly nationwide network of Gleaners. When this network is complete it will supply over thirty million pounds of produce each year for our nation's poor. Additionally it will be financially self sufficient from faith based and other private sector funding sources. In as much as a modest expenditure of TEFAP monies could make the success of this effort and others like it much more likely, this should be done where applicable.

In closing let me summarize my remarks. We waste over ninety billion pounds of food per year in the United States. Much of this waste is fresh produce. The amount of good, nutritious produce that is available to be donated to our nation's poor is functionally limitless. Through organizations like Society of St. Andrew and others, this produce can be effectively packaged and distributed to agencies that serve those in need. What is lacking are sufficient funding and a significant government/charity partnership arrangement that can make progress possible. Innovative use of the TEFAP program can make progress happen and I encourage you to move forward. Thank you.

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Society of St. Andrew